

▼▼▼ To the Teacher

This text takes a very definite value position which the authors feel is well supported by recent scholarly research. That position is that African-Americans have made many valuable and significant contributions to the state and to its culture. We argue throughout the text that what we know as South Carolina cannot be understood apart from its African influence. Hopefully, we have come far enough so that this position is no longer controversial. We can remember the day when state authorities considered integration too controversial to discuss.

The authors also take a multi-cultural perspective. We want students to understand and respect all cultures that have contributed to our state. Looking at this text alone, one might wrongly conclude that the authors take an Afrocentric point of view. Certainly it is true that this book focuses on African influences and highly values those influences. You should remember that this is intended to be a supplementary text, not a main text. It is meant to lend a greater balance to main texts that usually give far more coverage to European culture and influence.

The authors take the position that neither of the two major cultures that have defined the state are inherently superior. Both have strengths and both have weaknesses. Neither European nor African cultures (and of course, these are summary terms for what are really many cultures within a continent) have a monopoly on virtue. One need only look around the world today and see that people of all cultures are capable of incredible violence and of incredible sacrifice.

We have accentuated the positive because the focus is contributions. But we have not avoided controversy. One cannot understand African-American contributions without looking at the struggle to survive and make contributions. That means we

must cover white racism. At the same time, we tried to give the most praise to those who responded in positive ways to the hatred they encountered. That is relatively easy in South Carolina because the overwhelming majority of civil rights leaders were moderate and carried little bitterness. Even the impatient young civil rights activists of the 1960s have done positive things in building the state. The message is that understanding and respect is healthier than misunderstanding and disrespect. In the last chapter, we also touch upon challenges African-Americans face today. While whites can help and be supportive, some of the solutions are coming and must come from within the African-American community itself.

Perhaps the most difficult balance to strike is that of inclusiveness versus exclusiveness. A multi-cultural approach attempts to strike that delicate balance. Everyone has a right to their own culture and to their own cultural pride, whether that be Scottish, Irish, French, Greek, German, Hispanic, Japanese, Native American, or African. But cultural pride should not be used to denigrate other cultures. As Americans we have a common culture as well. Our common culture is the product of all our individual cultures. Above all, a democratic culture values diversity, tolerance, and respect. It rejects those parts of our unique cultures that hurt others. It is the wisdom that comes from hundreds of years of trying to live together, often unsuccessfully. It is the American dream that we can do better and be better than the last generation.

Pictures are a very important part of the book. We looked at thousands of pictures and tried to select the ones that we thought students would find most interesting. We used a number of pictures from Dr. Constance Schulz's *The History of S.C.* Slide Collection. This collection should be available in most

schools or from the State Department of Education. We have noted the slide number in each caption. You might consider using the slides and the more complete descriptions that are with the collection as you discuss the ideas in this book with your class.

This text is designed so that it can be used in several ways. First, it can be used as a stand-alone text for a separate section of your social studies class. The chapters follow enough of the history of the state so that they should make sense to students in terms of what takes place when. If you want to use the book this way, you should allow a minimum of four weeks.

It can also be used as a supplement to a main text. You can fit the chapters between chapters in the main text. Some can be chosen on chronological grounds. Obviously, chapters on the Civil War and Reconstruction can be done after like chapters in a main text. Other chapters like those on literature and on the arts will have to be arbitrarily placed. The chapter on military service could fit in after any of the war chapters in the main text. But it might work best when you are covering the history of the early 1900s.

It has a significant emphasis on World War I, a war usually not given much emphasis in main texts.

Finally, you could use a combination method. You can work in the chapters that have the best chronological fit after like chapters in the main text. Then you can set aside about a two week period to cover the chapters that focus on literature, music, and the arts. You might consider scheduling that separate module during February, which is Black History Month. Black History Month is a time when the popular press often carries stories on art and culture that can supplement what you are studying in class.

We have deliberately chosen to write in a nontraditional style for textbooks, what we call a “conversational” style. This style uses many personal pronouns, like “we,” “us,” and “you,” and some colloquial expressions. Our reason for choosing this style is to make the book more reader friendly by engaging the student in what sounds like a personal conversation. We hope you and your students will enjoy reading this book as much as we enjoyed writing it.